

Appl. No.: 10/612,671
Amdt. dated 12/21/2004
Reply to Office action of October 7, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Final Office Action dated October 7, 2004, Claims 1-9 are pending. Claim 1 and various independent claims are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by the cited references of Daines, et al., Jennings, Walker, et al., Norris, et al., and Foster, et al.

On December 9, 2004, Examiner Edmondson discussed this application by telephone with the undersigned. Applicant appreciates the courtesies extended by the Examiner during the interview. The following is submitted to be an accurate summary of the matters discussed during the December 9, 2004 telephonic interview per Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP) § 713.04.

During the telephonic interview, the Examiner requested Applicant to amend independent Claim 1 to emphasize the intermediary nature of the preform and submit a response for the Examiner's consideration. Accordingly, Applicant has amended Claim 1 above to recite that the "structural members of the preform have a combined mass that is at least about twice the mass of the machined structural assembly" and further that the "structural members of the preform define an outer surface that is generally unmachined." Thus, the preform is structured to be used as an intermediary member in the manufacture of the machined structural assembly. That is, in the intermediate or preform state, with the structural members joined by the linear friction weld joint, the preform is oversized relative to the predetermined dimensions of the finished structural assembly and the preform defines an outer surface that is unmachined. Thus, the preform is not a welded assembly of members that are generally pre-machined over the majority of their outer surfaces, e.g., as taught by Walker, et al. Instead, the preform of the present invention is unmachined, and configured to be machined to the predetermined dimensions of the finished structural assembly by removing at least about one-half of the mass of the unmachined preform.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the cited references disclose the claimed feature of Claim 1 as amended, i.e., a linear friction welded preform formed of unmachined members with a combined mass that is substantially greater than that of the finished assembly of predetermined dimensions. For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that all of the pending Claims 1-9 are allowable.

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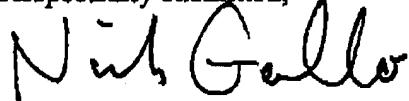
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CONCLUSIONS

In view of the remarks presented above, Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. As such, the issuance of a Notice of Allowance is therefore respectfully requested. In order to expedite the examination of the present application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney in order to resolve any remaining issues.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,

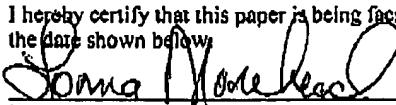


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Lorna Morehead

December 21, 2004

Date

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